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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: WIPO DG GURRY OUTLINES REFORM PLANS

- ¶1. SUMMARY: The new WIPO DG is addressing the challenges facing WIPO and trying to improve the functioning of the organization, in particular by trying to break the deadlock on substantive issues before WIPO Committees and using the budget process to realign WIPO's organizational structure. END SUMMARY.
- ¶2. We met with Director General to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Francis Gurry and WIPO Legal Advisor Edward Kwakwa on November 17, 2008. DG Gurry assumed his new post at WIPO on October 1, 2008, marking a new direction for the organization on good governance and respect for intellectual property. DG Gurry commented that several of the committees in WIPO have not moved forward on a work plan for many years because of political impasses on various issues, such as in the Standing Committee on Patents, the Intergovernmental Committee on traditional knowledge and cultural expressions and genetic resources, and the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights.
- ¶3. In order to find a way forward, DG Gurry is suggesting that Member States consider reaching an agreement on a package of outstanding issues before these committees. He reiterated that this would be a Member State-driven process, fully scoped by Members, and if consensus is not reached on the package, an agreement would not be made. DG Gurry plans to hold an Ambassador-level meeting with regional coordinators and the General Assembly chair (Nigeria) to discuss this issue on November 25.
- ¶4. DG Gurry also discussed the need to realign the organization so that it can effectively fulfill its mandate. A process has been underway to redefine strategic goals and redistribution of personnel. DG Gurry has requested a revised program and budget structure for WIPO in several business units, especially in the area of the Development Agenda, which has been an important aspect of work in WIPO on the interface of IP and developing and least-developed country priorities. DG Gurry stated that adoption of the revised budget by Member States will be essential for him to have successful implementation of the Development Agenda, as the proposal will eliminate duplication on WIPO's development-related activities, which currently exists, and enable efficient deployment of available resources. DG Gurry will present his revised program and budget report for 2008/2009 before the WIPO Membership on December 10-11, 2008.

TICHENOR